



**ACT**  
Government  
Education and Training

# EXTERNAL VALIDATION REPORT 2015

for

**HAWKER COLLEGE**



## **Introduction: Overview of the Validation process**

As part of the Territory's school improvement approach, public schools and colleges in the Australian Capital Territory are required to participate in an External Validation process every four years. This document captures the findings of the panel during this cycle of validation.

In broad terms, the panel sought to determine, through evaluation and validation, the extent to which the school is meeting its agreements, achieving its priorities, and addressing its challenges: in the context of a continuously improving educational environment.

External Validation was conducted over three days and involved a wide variety of data gathering approaches including observations, interviews and documentation. This approach provided evidence for the panel to consider against the nine inter-related domains in the National School Improvement Tool that informed our commendations and recommendations.

### **Section A: School context**

Opened in 1976, Hawker College has established strong traditions in academic achievement, vocational development, and sporting, artistic and cultural activities. The college provides a learning environment that is rigorous, purposeful, supportive, caring and friendly. The ethos of the college promotes values of honesty, excellence, fairness and respect. The quality learning experiences offered at Hawker College are contemporary and are designed to assist students in achieving their desired future.

The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a measure that enables meaningful comparisons to be made across schools. It has been developed specifically for the My School website and measures key factors that correlate with educational outcomes. The college ICSEA has remained steady throughout the life of the plan.

There are significant student groups identified within the total enrolment of 431 students including 87 English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island and 33 International students. Over the life of the plan enrolments have declined from 546 in 2012. The panel agrees that the opening of Gungahlin College was a significant factor in this decline.

The diverse senior secondary curriculum at Hawker College allows students to structure their learning program with choices to suit their individual needs. Teachers have a high level of expertise in their teaching fields and the college has excellent facilities for use in the fields of study offered.

To ensure students reach their full potential, students are provided with extensive student support services. This includes transition support, careers counselling, work experience, academic and vocational package support, pastoral care, school counsellor and chaplain services, and Mentoring and Information Group (MI Group, formerly known as Group Advisory Session) and interviews for student pathways planning.

Hawker is a student-centred college. Students are encouraged to participate in the many extra-curricular activities provided to make new friends and to develop and broaden their interests. The college has high expectations in relation to academic performance, attendance and behaviour. MI Group teachers, supported by a Year Coordinator for each year, monitor the overall progress of each student in MI Group and advise on their selection of Accredited (A) and Tertiary (T) packages for their secondary college programs.

The college has had significant change in leadership over the four year period and now have a stable, focused leadership team. A reduction in staff numbers also occurred during the life of the plan due to the decline in enrolments.

Hawker College is a community of learning, as depicted in the college logo. The college vision, as stated in the Course Handbook and the Prospectus, is to provide a learning environment that provides opportunities for students to excel and thrive and to ensure that they are equipped with the skills to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

## **Section B: School performance**

The school has a leadership team who are clearly committed to finding ways to improve on current student outcomes. There is evidence of school wide commitment to every student's success and staff of the school report significant student engagement.

The student learning data indicated a rise in median ATAR from 72.90 in 2012 to 81.55 in 2014. Over the life of the plan, the percentage of the cohort receiving a Year 12 Certificate remained steady at between 92 to 93 percent. The percentage of the cohort receiving a Tertiary Entrance Statement (TES) declined from 52.7 percent in 2012 to 45 percent in 2014.

Hawker College recognised the need to provide opportunities for extension across the curriculum and students are able to participate in an honours program as well as in vocational education courses. Further, the panel noted four students graduated from the ANU Secondary College program in Biology, Physics and Chemistry in 2014.

There was evidence provided which indicated significant pathway tracking and academic counselling through the Mindmatters framework. The panel noted the college was the first in the ACT to receive Mindmatters accreditation, a significant achievement.

The active tracking of student pathways to ensure packages were a best fit for students included counselling into vocational education subjects. There was a significant rise in the awarding of vocational statements of attainment and the panel noted this could be attributed to certification changes in 2013 and also the targeted pathway changes offered to students. Fifteen students completed Australian School Based Apprenticeships (ASBA), 44 Hawker College students participated in structured workplace learning in 2014 and 144 participated in work experience programs.

The college has attempted to collect and report perception data from students, staff and parents using the surveys developed by the Education and Training Directorate (the Directorate), although the panel considers the response rates quite low. There is an opportunity for the school to explore additional methods by which it could more regularly collect, collate and respond to the perceptions and feedback of the whole community.

There was a wide range of anecdotal information provided through the interview process and currently students, staff and parents report they are very satisfied with the college. Some of this anecdotal information was supported in the Australian School Climate and School Identification Measurement Tool (ASCIMT) in 2014.

The panel noted students complete a unit evaluation each semester and the response rate for the last cycle was 36 percent. The panel considers this a potentially good source of feedback to inform teaching practice and encourages the college to increase the response rates for future surveys.

Staff reported that some challenges faced across the college in the previous four year period were due to the drop in enrolments and the flow on effect of a decrease in the breadth of subject offerings and a loss of staff in 2013. The panel noted the multiple areas of skill present in the current staff demographic to address this challenge. The panel agrees with staff that reducing line allowances for projects has had impact on morale and that 2013 was a low point.

The panel noted a decline in enrolment over the life of the plan from 546 in 2012 to 431 currently. There are 11 identified Indigenous students currently enrolled and a revised Reconciliation Action Plan and specific placement of Indigenous students into MI Groups has been a development in the second half of 2015.

The panel noted a significant support mechanism in place for inclusion support funded students who have identified learning needs, as well as students who are referred for support with diverse learning needs. Planned processes guide how the different needs of students are addressed, and how opportunities to learn are provided, including multiple pathways for transition to external studies or work.

The panel commends the significant strength in student voice and participation in co-curricular groups (such as Gaia, Students for Independence and Autonomy or SIA). These groups have had an impact on the culture and environment of the college through sustainability and inclusivity initiatives and targeted fundraising projects. Students also have the opportunity to participate in structured co-curricular options including Creative Arts competitions, art and design exhibitions, and sport and outdoor education. Students articulated their sense of connectedness to the college and its values of honesty, excellence, fairness and respect. They report that these values are present and alive within their focus groups.

Students interviewed demonstrated a love of learning and indicated that respectful relationships amongst staff and students were evident and reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents interact with each other.

The college has processes, staffing and systems in place to deliver a broad range of Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) courses and VET programs and the panel noted the large number of statements of attainment awarded (778) in 2014 in comparison to previous years. The school curriculum plan and curriculum delivery balance requirements to address all learning areas and school leaders ensure there are regular discussions about curriculum delivery through the articulated professional learning plan.

Regular communication with parents and carers through the Assessment Alert Application, a regular newsletter, email contact and the parents and citizens group (P & C) through the new initiative of parent forums is expected to give parents and carers easy access to understanding the operation of the college.

There was also evidence provided about the wider emerging community links with partnerships developed with Kangara Waters and the Academy of Interactive Entertainment.

Monitoring and tracking of student attendance and academic progress was demonstrated through several notification letters available for staff to use when communicating this information to parents and carers.

There is a documented professional learning plan and the school has arrangements in place for regular meetings which have a specific professional learning focus including new teacher induction. The panel noted whole staff professional learning such as Accidental Counsellor training, inclusive practice and Positive Partnerships training and regular student well being

meetings where comprehensive learner profiles are utilised to maximise student outcomes. This has resulted in a culture shift in embedding learning diversity through out teaching programs in the college.

The panel noted that a significant strength in the teaching programs on offer in the college is the mathematics program and the clear evidence supplied to highlight not only student tracking in mathematics surrounding attendance, understanding and application, but also the significant critical analysis and subsequent changes undertaken in the program in 2014.

#### **Evidence cited and its validation**

##### **Evidence list:**

Annual School Board Reports 2012 - 2014

Annual Operating Plans 2012 - 2015

School Plan for Hawker College (2012 – 2015)

Professional Learning Plans 2014 and 2015

Stakeholder perception survey data

Australian School Climate and School Identification Measurement Tool (ASCIMT) 2014

2015 Professional pathways sample

Staff, student and parent interviews

2015 MI Group Teacher Information & Weekly Planner semester 1

Absence Processing

Application for Recognition as a MindMatters School 2013

Application for Special Consideration 2015

Approval for Special Consideration 2015

Collaborative Classroom - various templates

Final: Hawker College Mental Health and Wellbeing Curriculum Map

Hawker College Prospectus

Hawker College Course Handbook

Australian School Climate and School Identification Measurement Tool

Hawker College MindMatters Folio

Hawker College Student Services Referral Flowchart,

Hawker College newsletter.

Focus Groups minutes - various

Health Questionnaire

New Teacher Induction form

Hawker Validation Parent & Student Survey Results 2015

Parent Forum Flyer

[www.hawkermaths.com](http://www.hawkermaths.com)

[www.hawker.act.edu.au](http://www.hawker.act.edu.au)

Student, staff and parent interviews conducted by the panel during the validation process.

## **Section C: School improvement planning and implementation**

### **Priority Areas**

The following priorities were identified in the School Plan:

Strategic Priority 1: Increase and celebrate our strong school culture of student success and quality learning outcomes

Strategic Priority 2: Enrich and enhance our excellent community reputation and partnerships that support enterprise education and increase the strong Hawker Collegiate collaboration.

Strategic Priority 3: Increase Student well-being through student empowerment and community involvement.

Strategic Priority 4: Increase staff enthusiasm and satisfaction through staff wellbeing.

The panel noted that the priorities in the 2012 - 2015 School Plan were linked to the External Validation report of 2011 and to Directorate goals and initiatives. Further, over the life of the plan only the interpretation of the second priority was adjusted, to reflect greater collaboration with cluster schools and some colleges more broadly in the network. In each year of the planning cycle, executive conferences formed part of the process in reviewing the School Plan and finalising the Annual Operating Plans. In 2014 and 2015, two classroom teachers were invited to join the executive team for these deliberations. In 2015, this was combined with participation in the Anthony Muhammad workshop on school culture. Drafts were circulated for review and comment by staff and by the school Board.

### **Achievements**

#### **Strategic Priority 1: Increase and celebrate our strong school culture of student success and quality learning outcomes**

The performance measures used by Hawker College for strategic priority 1 included ATAR results, year 12 Certification, VET and enrolment data.

Over the life of the plan the college has reviewed curriculum processes and implementation to ensure currency, relevance and student engagement. The panel noted the college is now in a position to fully implement the Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history in 2016. The blended learning model in mathematics has been extensively reviewed in response to parent and student feedback, and there is significant evidence of the high impact this model of teaching and learning is having on student outcomes.

The panel was impressed with the rapid adoption of Google Classroom and apps to support student learning and organisation and encourages the college to pursue a more explicit ubiquitous use of devices across the learning environments to further enable innovative and contemporary teaching practices. The panel encourages the college to build teacher capacity and develop better classroom practice through the recently established collaborative classroom model.

The panel found an improvement in percentage of students achieving an ATAR in the top five percent from 3.28 percent in 2012 to 5 percent in 2014. However, over the life of the plan the

percentage of year 12 students receiving a Year 12 Certificate or equivalent VET qualification remained steady. The college has consistently achieved a median ATAR on average of 75. In 2014 the median was 81.55. The panel also noted that in 2014 the percentage of TES receivers above the UC and ANU published cut-offs rose by seventeen percentage points and twenty one percentage points respectively from the 2013 data.

The panel confirmed the significant decline in enrolments in 2012 could be attributed to the opening of Gungahlin College. Further declines in student enrolment could be influenced by demographics of the Belconnen area. However, the panel suggests the number of enrolments remains a concern. The panel notes the emphasis on promoting in area enrolments and recommends that the college consider further steps to arrest the decline, so that a diverse subject choice and a range of opportunities for students can be maintained.

The college has undertaken steps to improve the data received from the high schools to improve the transition process. The panel noted a range of data capture and presentation reports that assist in this process and some of these reports are provided back to the entry high school. The panel recommends that new systems in place for monitoring and tracking student achievement be used to monitor the success of transitions programs and course counselling over time.

**Strategic Priority 2: Enrich and enhance our excellent community reputation and partnerships that support enterprise education and increase the strong Hawker Collegiate collaboration.**

The performance measures used by Hawker College for strategic priority 2 included satisfaction surveys of parents, staff and students, number of community partnerships

The panel found a high degree of satisfaction amongst staff and parents that students are getting a good education at the college. There is evidence that the rise in the parent response followed a most extensive review of, and modification to, the blended learning model in mathematics. The panel also noted a significant increase in parents agreeing that community partnerships are valued and maintained over the life of the plan. This is reflected in the re-activation of the P&C in 2015 and the commencement of parent forums. The Panel encourages the work recently commenced on mapping and documenting partnerships established so that the college can strengthen community partnerships across the curriculum.

The panel noted the completion of the Belconnen Regional Trade Skills Centre (BRTSC) places Hawker College in a unique position for student certification in Bakery and Patisserie, adding significantly to the range of opportunities for enrichment at the college. In addition, further collaboration within the Belconnen Network has been enhanced with the identification of a year 10 Transitions Advisory Coordinator (TACo) and the Hawker Student Profile. The panel recommends the college identify appropriate data sources to monitor the success of these initiatives in improving pathways planning, transitions and enrolment into appropriate programs for students.

**Strategic Priority 3: Increase Student well-being through student empowerment and community involvement.**

The performance measures used by Hawker College for strategic priority 3 included satisfaction surveys of students, attendance and student retention data, and wellbeing Mindmatters surveys.

The college undertook the Mindmatters accreditation process in 2013 and was the first ACT college to be granted accreditation. The framework is used to promote mental health and wellbeing in school communities. The college has conducted student wellbeing surveys as part



of the Mindmatters framework in 2014 and 2015. These have been informative in providing information for MI Group teachers and case managers such as the year coordinators, the student services coordinator and the school psychologist in supporting particular students for a range of issues, including mental health.

The Pasifika program was initiated in 2014 for students at the college and the two feeder high schools, Belconnen and Kingsford Smith, with the purpose of engaging students of Pacific Islander background with schooling and further education. The panel noted that all these students at the college graduated in 2014.

Student voice through student-initiated leadership and action is an important part of Hawker College life. The panel saw this reflected in the work of student welfare and in action groups such as the Gaia sustainability action group, the Students for Independence and Autonomy (SIA-mental health awareness promotion group) and the Student Wellbeing Action Groups (SWAG). An example of action taken was the sustainability audit conducted by Gaia in 2014, as a result of which a new recycling strategy was implemented to reduce the quantity of waste going to landfill.

The panel notes that measures of student satisfaction from system surveys could not be relied upon due to a low response rate over 2013 and 2014. The college has assured the panel that processes are now in place to ensure a higher response rate in the future. The panel were unable to identify reliable data that informs the retention rate from year 11 to year 12.

The college attendance rate is tracking very close to the Directorate's target of 90 percent. The panel considers a slight rise in year 11 attendance over the life of the plan can be attributed to the robust review and revised processes implemented through Mindmatters.

The panel agreed that students find the college to be a calm, purposeful environment, supportive of individual differences, where relations with staff members are positive and supportive and where they are accepted, included and respected and their contributions are valued.

#### **Strategic Priority 4: Increase staff enthusiasm and satisfaction through staff wellbeing.**

The performance measures used by Hawker College for strategic priority 4 included staff satisfaction surveys, staff attendance and student retention.

A clear professional learning plan has been articulated each year by the college and regular short sessions, including whole days, have been used to assist build staff capacity and familiarity in processes to support student learning and wellbeing. The panel highlights the significant work commenced in 2015 to support students with diverse learning needs, including professional learning in Positive Partnerships, and Accidental Counselling.

The panel noted that over the life of the plan there has been significant volatility in staff satisfaction and this could be attributed to decisions to reduce both staffing levels and staffing allowances as a consequence of declining enrolments over the life of the plan. Decisions to investigate and review the blended learning model in mathematics may also have had an effect. The impact was especially observed in staff perception in 2013. However, the panel also noted staff satisfaction had bounced back to excellent levels in relation to the education being provided, receiving constructive feedback about their practice, and most significantly communication between staff and their supervisors (from 45% in 2012 to 92% in 2014), and opportunities to contribute to decision-making, rising from 55% in 2012 to 75% in 2014.



The panel were unable to identify reliable data that informs the retention rate from year 11 to year 12, nor staff attendance data. The panel expects that the new Directorate data system in development will go some way to providing this data in the future.

### **Reflections**

The senior leadership team has been consistent since 2012 while the decline in enrolments has required the college to release a School Leader C (SLC) position and consolidate roles and responsibilities amongst the remaining six SLCs. The panel agrees that the school leadership team has maintained focus on the improvement agenda over the improvement cycle. They have also ensured all stakeholders were informed and on board with the school agenda.

Changes in student numbers have required changes in curriculum provision. In each case where a course had to be discontinued, the panel agrees that arrangements were made to support students in completing majors already in progress. The panel suggests the college consider carefully strategies to ensure student enrolments are maintained to ensure students have a wide curriculum choice.

The panel recognises the school also considerably improved the collection of summative data over the life of the plan. The panel suggest that the school continue to systematically collect and interrogate available evidence to inform future improvement. Concurrently, the college will need to identify suitable performance measures to be used consistently over the life of the plan against which targets can be established that can demonstrate improvements over time. Key initiatives and programs can be continually improved if regularly evaluated for their effectiveness in producing desired improvements in student learning and performance. There is significant capacity within the college now to undertake this exercise.

### **Evidence cited and its validation**

Hawker College School Summative Evaluation Report 2015

ASBR 2012 - 2014

AOP 2012 - 2015

School Strategic Plan for Hawker College (2012 – 2015)

Professional learning plans 2014 and 2015

2015 Professional pathways sample

Staff, student and parent interviews

2015 MI Group Teacher Information & Weekly Planner semester 1

Absence processing

Application for recognition as a MindMatters School 2013

Application for Special Consideration 2015

Approval for Special Consideration 2015

Collaborative Classroom - various templates

Final: Hawker College Mental Health and Wellbeing Curriculum Map

BSSS data sets

Hawker College SNL Snapshot 2014  
Hawker College Student Services Flowchart  
Health questionnaire  
Focus Groups minutes - various  
New Teacher Induction  
Hawker Validation Parent & Student Survey Results 2015  
Special Consideration processes & forms

## **Section D: National tools self-evaluation results**

### **National School Improvement Tool**

In 2015 the college undertook a process of self-assessment against the National School Improvement Tool. The executive team discussed each of the domains in detail and arrived at a consensus on ratings for the college against each domain. This was then opened up for staff discussion in cross-faculty and in-faculty groups.

Staff were encouraged to identify statements that best represented the current state at the college against each domain. These were collected in a database along with supporting information and evidence. Output from this database, sorted according to each domain, was provided to the panel without an overall analysis or consensus on a rating for the school.

Students and parents responded to a survey that focused on the key theme of each domain, rather than the specific statements within the domain. Parents and carers were also able to contribute to the college's self-assessment process through focus group discussions.

The following is the panel's validation of the information provided by the College.

In relation to the **Explicit improvement agenda** domain the panel was able to verify:

- *The school has developed an agenda for improvement in partnership with parents and the community and school leaders can describe the improvements they wish to see in student behaviours and outcomes.*
- *The school improvement agenda has been effective in focusing and to some extent narrowing and sharpening the whole school's attention on core learning priorities.*
- *The leadership team has analysed school performance data over a number of years and is aware of trends in student achievement levels.*
- *The school leadership team is clearly committed to finding ways to improve on current student outcomes.*
- *There is evidence of a school wide commitment to every student's success and staff of the school tell stories of significant student improvement.*

Over the course of the plan the college has undergone significant changes within the leadership team. Yet despite these changes they have maintained a focus on a core set of strategic priorities. It was evident through conversations with staff, students and parents that there is a strong and optimistic commitment by staff to the improvement of student wellbeing and mental health; as well as the implementation of strategies to make the college more inclusive to the differing learning needs, requirements and preferences of a diverse range of students. The

structure and focus of the MI Groups combined with the Mindmatters initiatives enabled teachers to tell stories of significant student improvement and success within the school.

Within the **Analysis and discussion of data** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *The school has established and is implementing a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of student achievement and wellbeing data.*
- *There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders view reliable and timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the school.*
- *There is a documented school plan and timetable for the annual collection of data on student achievement and wellbeing.*
- *One or more of staff have been assigned responsibility for implementing the annual plan, analysing the full range of school data, and summarising, displaying and communicating student outcome data for the school.*

The systems and processes in place to manage the collection and analysis of data at the college are highly refined and efficiently implemented. The panel was able to verify very effective whole college systems to track and report student achievement with regard to course completion and achievement. This data is used predominantly for analysis at the whole school level. The use of data to measure individual progress or class performance, including comparisons of pre and post test results is sporadic across the school. The panel noted that generally teachers make little use of data to reflect on their teaching during the teaching of a course, with the majority of reflection prompted by the student post-unit evaluations; the mathematics faculty being a notable exception to this.

Within the **Culture that promotes learning** domain, the panel could verify that:

- *There is an expectation that every student will learn and achieve positive outcomes. Classrooms are calm but busy and interruptions to teaching time are kept to a minimum.*
- *The 'tone' of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to purposeful, successful learning.*
- *Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents and carers interact and in the language they use in both formal and informal settings.*
- *Parents and carers and families are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school and are welcomed as partners in their children's learning.*
- *Staff morale is generally high.*

Through the Mindmatters program and associated activities the panel affirmed a deep belief in the college that every student is important and capable of successful learning. The college clearly places a high priority on building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. Interviews with students revealed a large number of positive stories and anecdotes that lead the panel to validate that the college is a safe, respectful, tolerant and inclusive learning environment.

The reactivation of the Parents and Citizens association, and the subsequent support for this by the school leadership indicates that parents and families are valued as partners within the school.

The innovative mathematics, and the Learning Diversity Support programs at the college demonstrates a strong focus on quality learning and the creation of a culture in which all students are engaged and challenged in meaningful learning.

In relation to the **Targeted use of school resources** domain the panel was able to verify:

- *The principal and other school leaders have given a very high priority to understanding and addressing the learning needs of all students in the college.*
- *The college has developed processes for identifying students learning needs, although there may not always be good school records of student achievement and progress.*
- *Physical spaces and technology are used effectively to maximise student learning. Learning spaces are organised for whole group work, small group work and individual work.*
- *Specialist diagnostic testing is organised for a small number of students with special needs, but teachers do not routinely administer tests to better understand specific learning difficulties or individual learning needs.*

Staff within the college could identify a wide variety of instances of school wide practices that assist in identifying and addressing student need, with the Learning Diversity Support program and the processes for special consideration being prominent examples. During the course of the plan the manner in which the school deploys the Learning Support Assistants has changed to produce a more flexible structure and process to respond appropriately to the needs of individual learners.

Within the mathematics faculty, the panel was very impressed with the innovative use of space, teaching time and technology to maximise student opportunity to engage and succeed in courses in this area. Students reported that the innovative structuring of mathematics within the college enabled them to access significantly more mathematics instructional time, resulting in improved mathematics scores.

Within the **Expert teaching team** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *Teachers and school leaders take personal and collective responsibility for improving student learning and wellbeing, working together and learning from each other's practices.*
- *School leaders place a very high priority on the ongoing professional learning of all staff.*
- *School leaders participate in professional learning activities, learning alongside teachers and the school support teachers to continue formal study and celebrates professional success.*
- *There is a documented professional learning plan.*

The college has a structured professional learning program that cycles between whole school professional learning and targeted and purposeful professional learning teams and faculty based activities. The accreditation of the college's Mindmatters program, and the implementation of the Learning Diversity Support program demonstrates how the school successfully sets professional learning priorities and plans for their successful implementation. The college is commended for its commitment to, and change of practice, that has produced increased attention to meeting the needs of students and their wellbeing.

The emerging Collaborative Classrooms initiative is providing the college with a structure for school leaders to visit each others classrooms to provide coaching and feedback. The panel notes the college plans to widen this initiative to all teachers. The innovative teaching and learning structure of the mathematics faculty has resulted in a culture and practice where teachers are continually and collaboratively enhancing their pedagogical knowledge and skills leading to the creation of an expert teaching team in this area.

The college actively recognises the professional success of its teachers. The panel noted a number of teachers and school leaders from the college are nominated for ACT Public Education Excellence awards, with a teacher of history at the college receiving the 2015 Excellence in Teaching award.

The panel was able to verify very high level of **Systematic curriculum delivery** across the college. The panel reviewed evidence to indicate that:

- *The college has a clearly documented whole-school plan for curriculum delivery. The plan is aligned with the Australian Curriculum and BSSS requirements.*
- *A strong alignment has been achieved between the overall curriculum delivery plan, and unit plans, classroom teaching and the regular assessment of students in relation to curriculum expectations.*
- *Considerable attention has been given to ensuring ‘vertical’ alignment of the curriculum so that there is continuity and progression of learning across years 11 and 12, with teaching in year 12 building on and extending the learning from the previous year.*
- *The curriculum delivery plan is being implemented throughout the school and is shared with parents and carers and the wider community.*
- *The curriculum plan is the reference against which flexible delivery is designed, assessment tasks are developed and student learning is reported.*

The curriculum programs at the college are clearly documented and aligned to the standards of the Australian Curriculum (English) and the requirements of the BSSS. Through the Learning Diversity Support program there is a systematic approach to making reasonable adjustments to allow students with disabilities and other particular needs to fully access and engage with the courses at the college.

The college has a sophisticated system to manage the articulation of the curriculum expectations, including assessment tasks, so that there is a high level of clarity of what (and when) teachers should teach and student should learn. These expectations are not only shared with parents and carers and students through course handbooks; the college has developed a process of on-demand and real-time assessment alerts ensuring that parents and carers are continually informed regarding the curriculum expectations for their student.

In relation to the **Differentiated teaching and learning** domain the panel was able to verify:

- *The school leadership team actively promotes the use of differentiated teaching as a strategy for ensuring that every student is engaged and learning successfully. It is recognised throughout the school that some students require significant adjustments to their learning if they are to be optimally engaged and challenged.*
- *Planning shows how the different needs of students are addressed, including multiple pathways for transition to external studies for students.*

- *Regular assessments of student learning are undertaken, but these often are summative and disconnected rather than exploring long-term progress in students' knowledge, skills and understanding over-time.*

The panel found that the Learning Diversity Support program provides an effective process within the college to manage adjustments required in classrooms to allow students with diverse learning needs to be engaged successfully. Tertiary students studying mathematics commented that the flexible and blended learning approach in this area provides them opportunity to engage and progress at their own, often accelerated, pace.

The college has a strong VET focus that is being expanded through the Belconnen Regional Trade skills Centre (BRTSC) partnerships and successful tertiary program that combined provide a wide range of pathways for students to further their study or transition to employment. The college has a guiding philosophy of ensuring the course selection is a 'best fit' for students' capabilities and aspirations. Through regular and timely course counselling the college can provide a good level of individualised access to the curriculum within and across classes through Tertiary, Accredited, Vocational and Modified options.

Within the **Effective pedagogical practices** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *School leaders are committed to continuous improvement in teaching practices throughout the school and expect team leaders and teachers to identify ways of doing this.*
- *Within the college there is clarity about what students are expected to learn and be able to do with high expectations of every student's learning.*
- *School leaders are explicit about their desire to see effective teaching occurring throughout the college, but are less clear on what this might look like.*
- *School leaders do not appear to be driving a strong agenda to improve teaching practices across the school. There is a lack of balance in teaching methods with an over-reliance on whole-group teaching, with mathematics being a notable exception.*

The panel noted that the effective and innovative pedagogical practices in place in the mathematics area stand in contrast to what is generally a traditional whole-class approach adopted within other curriculum areas of the school. Unit outlines provided to students provide clarity around what students are expected to learn and be able to do.

The panel noted that the school leaders are explicit about their desire for pedagogical practices to improve, reflected in the structure and frequency of professional learning communities and whole school professional learning, however there is no explicit position on the kinds of teaching they wish to see occurring across the school.

Within the **School - community partnerships** domain the panel has been able to verify:

- *The college has established a range of partnerships with local business and community organisations with the express purpose of improving outcomes for students.*
- *There is clear evidence that partnerships are having their intended impact, and that the partnerships are being implemented as intended.*
- *Some of the partnerships tend to be mutually convenient arrangements with the sharing of expertise and facilities between institutions and organisations.*

A strength of the college over the plan has been the level of student achievement of VET qualifications. To facilitate this, the college has been very successful in developing a wide range of partnerships with the local business community to enable the necessary structured workplace learning placements. As an example the college has a Memorandum of Understanding with Kangara Waters Lifestyle Community and Care centre that facilitate students undertake a range of VET, ASBA and volunteering opportunities.

The college has a long standing partnership with Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE) that provides scholarship opportunities to students for further study and a monetary grant to support ICT, Arts and Technology within the college.

The college also has strong partnerships with feeder high schools including collaborative work around common assessment tasks in science, and high school to college transitions.

### National Safe Schools Audit Tool

The self-evaluation using the National Safe Schools Framework audit tool was led by a senior leader at the college by making direct correlation between the tool and data coming from the Mindmatters initiative within the school. This was then moderated through a discussion with the school leadership team.

The college found a high level of agreement in the majority of areas outlined within the tool. One area for further improvement noted was the need to continue to develop the college's social and emotional wellbeing curriculum.

## **Section E: Commendations and recommendations**

### Commendations

Hawker College is commended for the following.

1. **Outstanding commitment to student well-being.** The college commitment to student well-being through the accreditation, resourcing and implementation of the Mindmatters Program has enabled an unprecedented delivery of pastoral care in a public college setting.
2. **Implementation of a blended learning model in mathematics.** Hawker College models best and innovative practice through its blended learning model in mathematics. The model has evolved since its inception to produce high quality learning outcomes for all mathematics students and this model could inform future developments for other faculties and colleges.
3. **Development of a positive and accepting culture that promotes tolerance and sustainability.** Student led initiatives such as Gaia and SIA have significantly contributed to a tone of acceptance and student action across the college. Parent initiatives to improve communication through P & C led forums are to be commended.
4. **Implementation of significant initiatives to support learning diversity.** The Hawker College Learner Profile is a significant development towards informing and supporting students with diverse learning needs. The Learning Diversity Team are to be commended for the professional learning and implementation of other supports to ensure that all students have access to a quality curriculum and learning outcomes.



## Recommendations

The panel recommends Hawker College pays attention to the following opportunities for improvement during the next planning cycle.

1. **Develop and articulate an explicit improvement plan with the wider college community so that the parents and carers, the community and staff can describe the detailed vision and improvement agenda for the college.** In order to assist the college in planning further growth, and increasingly become the college of choice for students within the PEA, it is recommended that the college develop a more explicit school improvement agenda in partnership with the wider community. This agenda can express in specific and measurable terms the improvements sought in student performance and include clear targets with accompanying time-lines. Efforts can be made to align the marketing of the college more closely with the strategic priorities of the college.
2. **Develop a systematic approach in collecting, analysing and using a range of formative student data that will provide greater visibility of student progress within courses, and associated value-added measures.** Establish a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of formative student learning data. This data can be used within and across courses to identify gaps in student learning and visualise growth in student performance at both the individual and collective level.
3. **Create a process to develop and share highly effective and evidence based teaching and learning practices.** Understanding that highly effective teaching is a key driver for successful student learning the college is encouraged to develop a culture of identifying, understanding and implementing quality teaching practices. A high priority should be placed on evidence based teaching practices that have been demonstrated through research and contextualised practice to be highly effective at adding value and contributing to student progress.

## Record of Validation Process

The following people were members of the external validation panel for Hawker College conducted on 5–7 August 2015.

Name: Belinda Bartlett

School: Alfred Deakin High School

Name: Peter Kent


School: Gordon Primary School

Name: Trazel Scott

School: Merici College

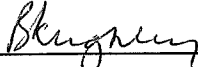
As chair of the panel I endorse that this is a true and accurate record of the findings from the external validation process.

Name: Belinda Bartlett

Signature:  Date: 31/8/2015

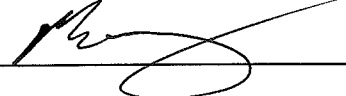
As principal of **Hawker College** I accept the Validation Report on behalf of the school community.

Name: Peter Sallis *per Frank Keighley Acting Principal*

Signature:  Date: 31/8/2015

As co-director of Quality Learning Australasia, external lead validators for the conduct of validation process in ACT public schools, I concur that the panel acted within the guidelines set by the ACT Education and Training Directorate.

Name: Michael King

Signature:  Date: 31/8/15